

CLIMATE NEWS

From Sheldon Whitehouse, Barbara Boxer, and Jeff Merkley

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WI Companies Kohl's and Johnson Controls win Climate Awards



Two Milwaukee-area companies were among 15 organizations to win 2014 Climate Leadership Awards for their work to reduce emissions linked to climate change. The awards are presented annually by the U.S. EPA in conjunction with the Association of Climate Change Officers, the Center for Climate and Energy Solutions, and the Climate Registry. Kohl's—a national specialty department store ranked 148 on the Fortune 500—was honored for setting and meeting goals to reduce carbon emissions. Kohl's has been improving energy efficiency in its stores, purchasing renewable energy, and installing solar panels. Johnson Controls—a global company with core businesses in the automotive, building, and energy storage industries—was recognized for exceeding its goal to reduce its carbon emissions intensity by 30% between 2002 and 2012. The company has implemented energy efficiency projects at its manufacturing sites, installed on-site renewable energy generation, procured green power products, and added alternative and more efficient vehicles to its fleet. Both companies participate in the Better Buildings Challenge—a national effort to reduce energy costs and carbon emissions through investments in energy efficiency. (*Milwaukee Journal Sentinel*)

Climate Change Threats to Infrastructure Pose 'National Crisis'

The nation's aging infrastructure makes up an interconnected web of systems that are alarmingly vulnerable to the shocks of climate change, according to a report that will inform the federal government's Third National Climate Assessment (NCA), which is set to be released next month. "It's kind of a national crisis," said Dr. Tom Wilbanks, senior scientist at the Department of Energy's Oak Ridge National Laboratory and a co-author of the report, entitled *Climate Change and Infrastructure, Urban Systems, and Vulnerabilities*. This will be the first time the NCA includes a section on the risks to infrastructure, a broad term that includes most major societal investments. Among them are health care systems; the nation's web of roads, airports, and seaports; and communications systems. Preparing these systems to deal with climate change will not only prevent costly repairs from physical damages, but also prevent system failures that reverberate through economy and society broadly, explains the report. (*ClimateWire*)

DOD: Climate Change is a "Significant Challenge"

Last week, the Department of Defense (DOD) released the 2014 Quadrennial Defense Review (QDR), detailing DOD's long-term strategy and priorities. For the second QDR in a row, the Pentagon has called out climate change as a "significant challenge for the United States and the world at large." The QDR calls climate change a "threat multiplier" which "will aggravate stressors abroad such as poverty, environmental degradation, political instability, and social tensions—conditions that can enable terrorist activity and other forms of violence." DOD anticipates that climate change will undermine its operational readiness at training facilities and bases. It plans to assess all military installations for vulnerabilities to climate change and develop plans to boost resilience in the face of uncertainty. The QDR also notes that climate change "creates both a need and an opportunity for nations to work together." A more accessible Arctic, humanitarian assistance operations, and disaster response are just a few examples where the military sees more international cooperation in the coming years. (*New Security Beat*)

Climate Change Could Drown One-Fifth of World Heritage Sites

Cultural monuments including the Statue of Liberty, the Tower of London, and the Sydney Opera House could be swallowed by the sea if global temperatures continue to rise, according to a new report. There are 720 sites on the UNESCO World Heritage List. With a temperature increase of just 1°C, more than 40 of these sites will be threatened by sea-level rise in the next 2,000 years if no protection measures are taken. If temperatures rise 3°C—which is well within the range scientists predict—nearly one-fifth of heritage sites will be affected. The IPCC projects 1.5 to 4.5°C of warming by the end of the century, but authors of the study looked at a longer time span to smooth out near-term uncertainties. "If we do not limit climate change, the archaeologists of the future will need to search for major parts of our cultural heritage in oceans," said Dr. Ben Marzeion, climate scientist at the University of Innsbruck and lead author of the study. The study also found that a 3°C temperature increase would cause up to 12 countries to lose more than half their current land surface and as many as 36 countries to lose at least 10 percent of their territory. More than 600 million people are currently located in areas that will be below sea level according to this analysis. (*ClimateWire/Environ. Res. Lett.* 9 034001)

